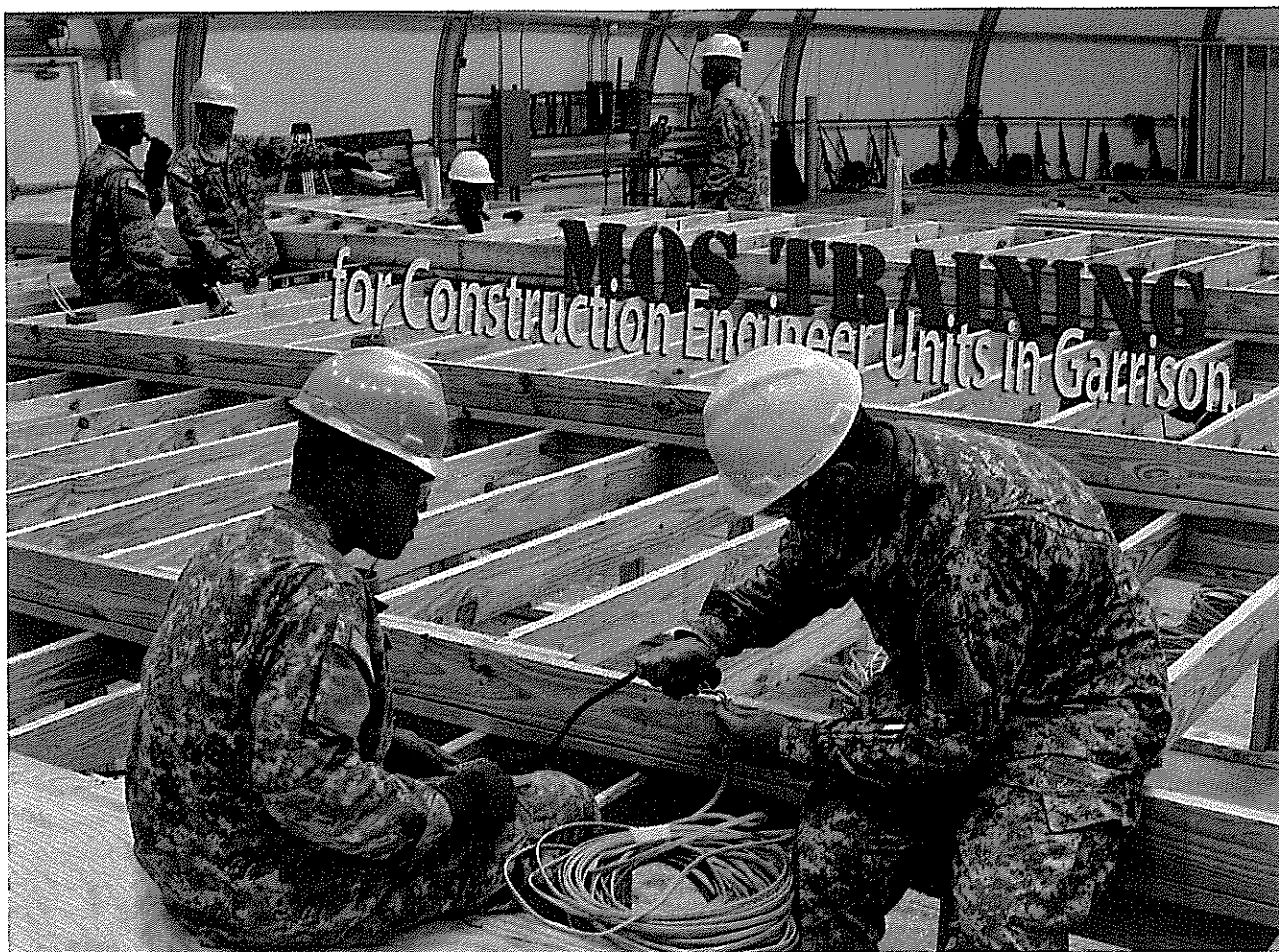


**AE** NEWS AND INFORMATION

**Story and Photographs by CPT Michelle Kim**  
**554th EN CO, 92nd EN BN**

*Soldiers perform carpentry work for the new 3rd Infantry Division Operations Center located at Evans Army Airfield, Fort Stewart, GA.*

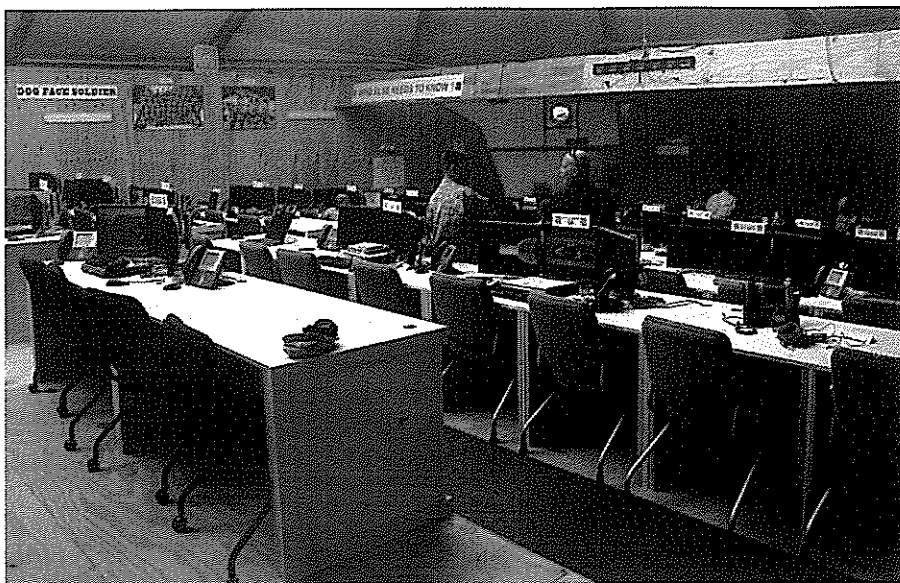
**W**hile in garrison, it can be challenging for construction units to maintain MOS proficiency. In between deployments to Iraq, the 92nd Engineer Battalion works hard to overcome that challenge. Every now and then, a great opportunity presents itself and the Black Diamonds are able to train construction skills while providing great support to the installation. The Rear Division Operations Center was one such opportunity. The 554th Engineer Company was able to construct a command and control center that closely mirrors the facilities that the 3rd Infantry Division will occupy when it deploys to Iraq. This allowed the vertical engineer company to train on carpentry and electrical skills that will be required on its deployment early next year.

The 554th Engineer Company, 92nd Engineer Battalion, converted two "clamshells" into the Division's operations center at Evans Army Airfield, Fort Stewart, Georgia. Within these

clamshells, the company constructed multiple offices, conference rooms and a briefing room. This complex allows the headquarters to plan and train on command and control tasks in preparation for deployment. The large project was separated into three overall construction missions each assigned to a platoon. Furthermore, the overall electrical mission was supervised by engineer warrant officer Larry Butterworth. Each platoon's 21R (electricians) coordinated and worked with Mr. Butterworth to ensure proper execution of the electrical portion of their own platoon's mission.

First Platoon "Rough Ryders," led by 1LT Matthew McCarthy and SSG Angel Montaz tackled the mission of constructing 11 staff offices and the command group suite. The command group's offices consisted of one each for the Commanding General, the Division Command Sergeant Major, the Deputy Commanding General – Maneuver, the Deputy Commanding General – Support, and the Chief of Staff. The Rough Ryders'

## AE NEWS AND INFORMATION



*A portion of the completed operations center. The project saved the 3rd Infantry Division approximately \$1.7 million through the use of troop construction. The mission lasted 45 days and required just over 51,000 man-hours.*

scope of work included the construction of the floors and walls, and the installation of lighting and electrical outlets. Soldiers recently arriving from Advanced Individual Training were excited to gain hands-on experience and test the skills they recently acquired. The new Soldiers also felt welcomed and integrated as members of the Rough Ryders.

Second Platoon "Build and Conquer," led by 1LT Michelle Kim and SFC Ernesto Valenzuela, were responsible for the construction of the Rear Division Operation Center briefing room. They constructed an 8-tiered stage, 61 desks, an 8' x 33' projector screen wall, and four rooms for the Division Signal Officer and her staff. Second Platoon's complex electrical work was led by the highest ranking electrician in the platoon, SPC Christopher Rutherford, who received guidance from WO1 Butterworth. This electrical work consisted of installing outlets, wiring one outlet per two desks, and multiple lights. SPC Rutherford led 10 Soldiers to complete this task within the carpentry timeline. He had to ensure the wires were placed as soon as the framework for the walls and floors were built so he would not slow down the carpenters' sheathing process. This project allowed many Soldiers, such as SPC Rutherford, to step up as a leader while displaying his superb electrical talents.

While First and Second Platoons worked in one clamshell, Third Platoon worked in the other. Third Platoon "Outlaws," led by 1LT James Belinga, WO1 Tyrone White, and SSG Omar Hernandez, were in charge of constructing the "Cubicle Farm". They built 18 offices for the Division Staff and two conference rooms. This project's main subtasks included the completion of the wooden flooring, emplacement of plastic modular flooring, construction of office walls, and the electrical wiring for lights and outlets. The Outlaws completed their initial scope of work

ahead of schedule; just over 25 working days. Part of their success was due to the ability to incorporate the project into a Field Training Exercise which ran 24 hours for seven days.

The 554th EN CO benefited from the project at Evans Army Airfield in countless ways and on many levels. Platoon Leaders were able to coordinate and plan for the overall project, to ensure proper safety measures were in place, and to supervise project completion. The Warrant Officers were able to fulfill their duties as newly assigned Platoon Technicians, by providing expert advice and technical expertise and ensuring Quality Assurance. The Non-Commissioned Officers assisted with Quality Control and taught their Soldiers how to complete a project that exceeded standards. At the Soldier level, this project was not only a great way to train and cross-train MOS skills, but it also offered new leadership opportunities. The 554th Engineer Company was fortunate to have been able to build the 3rd ID Operations Center because these types of projects are scarce but critical for vertical engineer units that deploy.

The project saved the division approximately \$1.7 million through the use of troop construction. The mission lasted 45 days and required just over 51,000 man-hours. The Soldiers of the 554th Engineer Company worked tirelessly to ensure the project was completed in time for the Division's first CPX. Those who walk through the clamshells at Evans Army Airfield will notice several small Black Diamonds—the 92nd Engineer Battalion symbol and motto. These diamonds remind all visitors of the value of construction engineer units and how they contribute to maneuver forces. The 554th Engineer Company's motto of, "ASSASSINS LEAD THE WAY!" is truly reflected in their performance on the construction of the 3rd Infantry Division's Operations Center at Evans Army Airfield. AE